

County of Hampshire

OFFICE OF THE COUNTY COMMISSION



March 6, 2023

Hampshire County Board of Education: Ed Morgan, President
Matthew Trimble, Vice-President
Bernard Hott
Corena Mongold
Kim Poland

Eric W. Strite
COUNTY CLERK

Ladies and Gentlemen:

The Hampshire County Commission has received a recent influx of questions relating to decisions made by the Hampshire County Board of Education (BOE) concerning the new elementary schools. Concerns were brought to the table at the Hampshire County Commission meeting Tuesday night, February 28, 2023. Mr. Morgan and Mr. Trimble representing the Board of Education were allowed to speak, and then the public was allowed to speak. The Goal of the Commissioners was to gain as much insight as possible on the matters, so they are able to accurately respond to the concerns of citizens.

The County Commission moved to request from the BOE a written response to each of the following concerns based on comments from both the concerned citizens and the BOE. While Mr. Morgan and Mr. Trimble touched on many of the following concerns Tuesday night, The Commission thought it appropriate to formally ask, in writing, for input from the full BOE.

1. Does the BOE believe they gave vested Hampshire County residents a voice in naming their schools? Mr. Morgan stated that the BOE had no responsibility to do this, but did make this effort anyway.
2. Mr. Morgan referenced the CEFPP committee as being the people's voice in supplementing the Board's decisions in choosing school names. What were the committee's guidelines or directives from the BOE to do this? Is there documentation on decisions reached, what were the outcomes of the decisions, and who was present?
3. Again, Mr. Morgan referenced the CEFPP committee as being a part of the name change process and read to the Commission a list of the Hampshire County people on the committee, then stated the county was well represented. Several public speakers later questioned strongly the validity of the committee. Since this past Tuesday the Commission has heard from members of the committee that were on the list cited by Mr. Morgan that say they were never involved in a name change discussion or didn't even know of such committee. Why are we seeing such discrepancy in accountability here?
4. Please give a clear statement of how the school names were chosen. Who exactly made the final recommendation for the names of the schools to the BOE to consider? It was also referenced by Mr. Morgan that the principals were responsible for choosing the names of the schools. Additionally, Mr. Morgan stated that the BOE was not required to have anyone's recommendation for the school names. The Commission would simply like to give their constituents a straight answer on how the BOE named the schools.

5. Will there be any mitigation for the loss of the park in Slanesville where the new school is being built? Were citizens made aware that they would lose this popular spot for their children's recreation before the bond was presented?
6. How will Slanesville School be supplied with water? Was the original new school in Slanesville designed and proposed to the public without a plan or funding for water? There are two wells located on the premises, one with ample amounts of water. Will there be consideration of keeping those and treating or updating them so they could at least be used as a backup water supply?
7. Has the Board of Education made any concessions in the bathroom plans in the new schools for transgenders? Mr. Morgan stated no there was not. He stated there are several single unit, same sex bathrooms. Plans were shown to the Commission. Mr. Morgan stated it may seem like a lot of bathrooms, but it is primarily for the teachers. Does the BOE as a whole wish to comment any further? The County Commission stated clearly, they would not have supported a vote on the ballot for funding that would include any type of concessions for transgender lifestyle choices.
8. Mr. Morgan commented that the County Commission only wants to work with the BOE on rumor type matters. Do any other Board of Education Members wish to expand on, agree, or disagree with him on that statement.

Please consider a prompt written response to the Hampshire County Commission on each of the questions above. We hope to show our concerned citizens that we do constantly make an effort to be responsible Commissioners and do our best to provide them with answers when we are approached, even when those answers are not always what they may want to hear. We would like to give the BOE a fair chance to help us provide answers and keep an open line of clear, straight-forward communication. We plan to post this letter of request and your answers for the public to see.

Thank you for your time and consideration


Brian W. Eglinger, President


Robert Q. Hott, Commissioner


David H. Cannon, Commisisoner